

Tortworth VC Primary School

Tortworth, Wotton-under-Edge, GL12 8HG

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has managed the recent disruption to staffing very well. Governors and staff have given strong support during this time. This is evident in the responses to staff questionnaires in which staff were unanimously positive.
- A particular strength of leadership and management is the determination to provide the best for the pupils. This is exemplified well in the rigorous monitoring and development of the quality of teaching. Governors share this determination and are well aware of the improvements in the quality of teaching, which has improved rapidly and is now good.
- The needs of the individual pupil are high on the school's list of priorities. A good example of leaders' and managers' attitudes to this is the appointment of a family mentor. The family mentor has built strong relationships with a number of families whose children might otherwise be vulnerable.
- Pupils' achievement took a dip during the period of instability. However, this has been addressed well and pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly due to the improvement in the quality of teaching. Pupils are now achieving well.
- The school has extremely rigorous systems for keeping pupils safe. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and they have excellent knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils almost always concentrate well and work hard in lessons. Their behaviour around the school is good and they show good care and consideration for other pupils.
- Provision for the youngest children in the early years is good. They make good progress during their time in Reception. Particularly good use has been made of the outside area, where there is a good range of interesting and engaging activities available.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils of all abilities are not consistently given work that challenges them and their progress slows when this happens.
- Teachers do not always adapt their lessons on the basis of how well pupils are learning, so pupils are not making the best possible progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 10 lessons, eight of these jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders and managers, staff, pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and one other member, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school days and analysed the results of the 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. He also took into account the views of a parent who wrote a letter to him and one who telephoned the inspection service provider.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning and policies and procedures, including those relating to pupils' safety.
- The inspector evaluated the school's information on the progress that pupils are making and scrutinised the work in their books.

Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tortworth VC Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school. There are three classes, one for the pupils in Years 6, 5 and 4, one for those in Years 3 and 2 and one for those in Year 1 and Reception. Children in the early years all attend full time.
- Fewer than four pupils in any year group are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority), which is well below average. There were fewer than five pupils eligible for free school meals in Year 6 last year.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average, particularly the proportion that have statements of their special needs.
- More pupils than are usually found leave or join the school at times other than the normal leaving or joining stages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been considerable disruption to staffing over the last year, but this has now been stabilised as two full-time appointments were made from January this year.
- Little Acorns pre-school shares the school site, but is managed independently and will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - high levels of challenge are consistently offered to pupils of all ability levels so that pupils are always fully engaged in their learning and make better progress
 - teachers improve their checking of pupils' learning during lessons in order to adapt their teaching so that pupils can make better progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and is ably supported by all the staff and governors. There is a shared determination to drive for continual improvement. Several staff, on their questionnaires, made positive comments, such as, 'I am proud to be a staff member as I feel we are a school that puts the individual child's needs at the heart of what we do.'
- Leaders and managers have created a strong ethos, where the quality of teaching is recognised to be of high importance. This ethos also ensures that good behaviour is encouraged. Records show improvements in the behaviour of some who find behaving well difficult.
- A good example of the effectiveness of leadership and management is the way that the recent disruption to staffing has been managed. The headteacher has made strenuous efforts to ensure that, although some pupils have had a succession of teachers, the impact of this has been minimised by ensuring continuity of teaching assistants in the classroom, for example.
- The leadership of teaching is rigorous and effective. Good examples were seen in the records where specific aspects of teaching were improved due to good monitoring and support.
- Although there have been changes in middle leadership, these changes have not slowed the pace of development. For example, the new leader for mathematics has identified gaps in pupils' knowledge in some areas of the subject and these are being addressed. Middle leadership is good.
- A very good example of the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is the effective use of the pupil premium funding. This is not only being used to enable those eligible to have extra academic support, but is being used very effectively to support those with social and behavioural issues through the work of the family mentor, for instance. Governors are fully aware of the use of the pupil premium funding. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Good relations are fostered with parents. All staff are on the playground at the start of the school day and engage with parents to ascertain whether there is anything they need to know. Parents were almost universally positive in their responses to Parent View. All those spoken to during the inspection were also very happy with the provision the school is making for their children.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced by good use of their environment, such as the 'wild woods' on the school site. The curriculum reinforces the development of British values well. For instance, pupils are introduced to the democratic process through voting for members of the school council. Pupils are being prepared well for their future life at secondary school and for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum also contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given many opportunities to work in pairs or small groups, which enhance their social skills. Pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and religions, both in Britain and around the world, developing their cultural knowledge well.
- The primary physical education and sport premium has been used well to provide support for teachers in teaching physical education. Pupils have more opportunities to be involved in inter-school competitions, for example, which have benefited their health and well-being. The funding has also been used to provide further opportunities for pupils, as popular extra resources for playtimes have been purchased. The funding was also used to enable a range of after-school clubs in different sports, but most of these have not been successful as parents find it difficult to collect their children later due to the isolated position of the school.
- The procedures for checking on all adults working with the pupils and those coming into school are extremely rigorous. There are very good systems for ensuring pupils' safety and the site is secure. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met and are being carried out effectively.
- The local authority has provided support as necessary, but usually through the very strong local cluster of small schools. However, it now regards the school as not requiring intensive support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are very supportive of leaders. This was particularly the case in the time of disruption to teaching. Their committee structure is well organised and focuses clearly on their duties. For instance, one of the committees takes responsibility for keeping a check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, which then reports back to the full governing body. Governors are well aware of what data are telling them and of the quality of teaching. This is not just through examining data, but also through their own visits and through their knowledge of systems used by leaders to improve teaching. Although with the changes in staffing there have been no opportunities as yet to reward good teaching, they understand the systems for this. They have, in the past, had to support the

headteacher in tackling underperformance. They challenge leaders well; minutes of meetings record questions asked and the responses. Finances are managed effectively. For instance, a very careful budget has been created to enable the school to continue with three classes into the foreseeable future.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They get on very well with each other. As one put it, 'Everyone is friends together.' Pupils regard it as a really friendly school. For instance, one pupil who had recently joined the school was very positive about how quickly he made friends and the warmth of the welcome he received.
- Pupils generally work hard and try their best in lessons. There are occasions when this slips for some pupils, but this is usually when work is not sufficiently stimulating or when it is too easy or too hard for them, for example.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and are keen to share them with adults. They are welcoming to visitors and keen to show their pride in their school and their work. This is also evident in the way that they take care of their books.
- Attendance has been consistently above the national average and has improved year-on-year in each of the last three years. There has not been any persistent absence in recent history and pupils arrive at school punctually. This reflects their great enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. There are particularly rigorous systems for checking on the suitability of all adults coming into school. Many detailed checks are carried out. Risk assessments are thorough and pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe, when using the internet for instance. Regular sessions have also been held for parents on e-safety, and those unable to attend are sent an information sheet.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and the vast majority of their parents agree. They are also extremely confident in being able to share problems with an adult if necessary. Many find that the family mentor is a great help when they are experiencing difficulties, for instance.
- A small minority of parents expressed concerns on Parent View about the school's effectiveness at dealing with bullying. However, pupils are very confident that bullying is dealt with very well when it is reported. As one said, 'It is usually just friends falling out.' Records in school confirm this. Pupils are fully involved in anti-bullying measures, producing very telling posters on the harm it can cause and how to deal with it.
- Pupils have extremely good knowledge of different forms of bullying. For instance, they are well aware of the possibilities of using the internet for bullying and know how to minimise these risks to themselves. They are also confident in their views that other forms of abuse, such as racist or homophobic language, are unacceptable.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the disruption in staffing last year. It is now consistently good and is enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Skilled teaching assistants play a key role in aiding pupils' learning. They are often assigned to pupils with special educational needs, but their work extends far beyond this and they were observed working with groups and enthusing them with challenging tasks.
- A particular improvement has been the levels of challenge provided for the most-able pupils. For instance, some Year 5 pupils were observed selecting challenges appropriate for Year 7 pupils in a mathematics lesson. However, this is not consistent and there are occasionally insufficient levels of challenge for pupils of all ability levels, and when this happens their progress slows.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics has also improved well. There is a clear programme of ensuring that basic skills are taught effectively. For example, all classes have phonics (linking letters to sounds) sessions at the same time, so that those who are still struggling with their reading in Key Stage 2 are able to have focused teaching to build these skills.
- Teachers' marking is a current focus for improvement in the school. There have been clear improvements since January and pupils say that marking helps them to know what they need to do to improve. Plenty of space is left in books for pupils to respond to teachers' marking, and even the youngest pupils are

expected to do this.

- Teachers are particularly good at assessing the skills that pupils have mastered in the long term. This enables them to identify those in danger of falling behind. There are then very good systems to provide them with extra support and to help them catch up.
- There are occasions in lessons when teachers do not always identify how well pupils are learning or adapt their teaching accordingly. For example, instances were observed where pupils had quickly mastered what was expected to be learnt, but were not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough. Similarly, there were occasions when pupils were struggling to understand and were not provided with easier work to build their confidence and knowledge. On these occasions pupils did not make the best possible progress.
- The strong links within the local cluster of small schools help teachers to share best practice and they are keen to improve their skills continually.
- Teaching is focused clearly on the needs of the pupils, particularly in ensuring that they are ready to move on to secondary school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved rapidly since January, when staffing issues were resolved. Data show that, despite the dip in their achievement in the second half of last year, they have made good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups from their different starting points.
- There has been a trend of improvement in pupils' attainment in the national assessments in Year 6 in recent years. However, the disruption to teaching caused a dip in 2014. This has now been addressed and pupils in the current Year 6 have already made considerably better than expected progress from their scores at Key Stage 1.
- Groups are too small for any trends to be identified in the performance of particular groups of pupils. For instance, in some year groups girls are doing better, but in others it is the boys. This is typical in small schools.
- Groups are also too small to draw conclusions when the progress of disadvantaged pupils is considered. Some are doing better than their peers and some not as well. This is down to their individual abilities. Overall, these pupils are making similar good progress to their classmates. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year to be able to comment on their progress and attainment without identifying them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress and some are making quite exceptional progress. This is due to the very careful analysis of their needs and the well-focused plans that assist them with their learning. As a result, the education they receive is meeting their needs well.
- Leaders identified that in the past not enough pupils were attaining the higher levels in the national assessments. This area has improved, as an encouraging proportion of pupils were seen working at above expected levels in all classes.
- The very few pupils from other ethnic groups are making the same good progress as their classmates. Those who do not speak English as their first language are supported well and are also making good progress.
- The higher than average number of pupils who join the school other than in Reception are quickly assimilated and enabled to make the same good progress as their classmates. For instance, none of the present Year 6 attended Reception in this school and half of them have joined in the last two years. However, all have made good progress from their starting points when they joined.
- Performance in the national phonic screening check was below average in 2014. However, a new system for teaching phonics has been adopted and pupils are now mastering these skills well. This is ensuring that the basic building blocks of reading are being learnt well and, by the time they leave, pupils read widely and confidently.

The early years provision is good

- Children's starting points when children join the school are generally rather lower than what is typical for their age. Most children make better than expected progress and by the end of the Reception year most are reaching average standards. This prepares them well to start Year 1.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. Very good links are made with parents before the

children start and these links continue as parents are encouraged to play a full part in supporting their children's learning. The leader has forged close links with the on-site pre-school, from which most children come, and other settings. This ensures that children settle quickly because they are already familiar with staff and their new surroundings.

- Staff make best use of the available space. For example, the outside area has a wide range of activities to interest and engage the children and to develop their learning. The 'mud kitchen' is particularly popular. Although there is no grass, two flower troughs have been built into the area, one with flowers and the other with vegetables, to ensure that children gain knowledge of their natural environment.
- The quality of teaching is good. The teacher or the teaching assistant often work with the Reception children as a group, so ensuring that they plan activities to meet their specific needs. For example, children worked outside with the teaching assistant using real money to purchase items from their 'garden centre'. After a while the teacher swapped with the teaching assistant and she took the children's learning on well, by starting them thinking about doubling by purchasing two identical items.
- There are occasions, however, when work is not planned to challenge the most-able children often enough. When this happens their learning slows.
- Children quickly learn how to behave and work with others, and the class is a harmonious and purposeful place. The environment is very safe and systems for keeping the children secure are rigorous.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109180
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	449557

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jerry Whitney
Headteacher	Carol Bowes
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 January 2010
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